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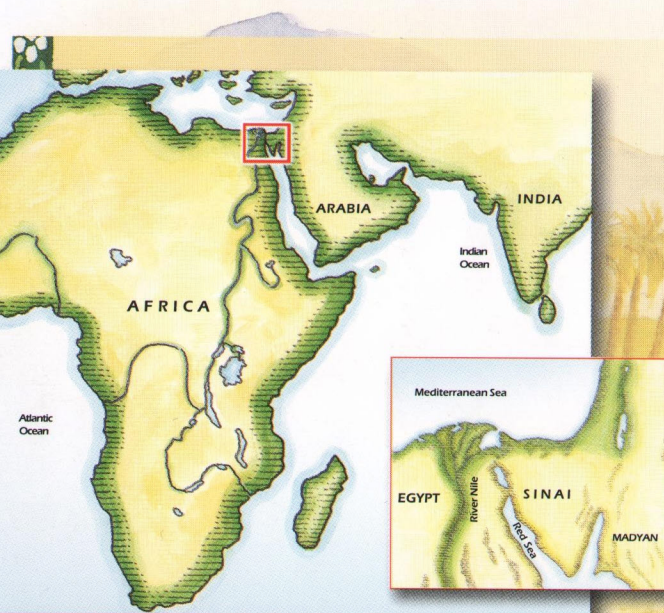
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1. The Children of Israel



Long long ago, more than 3000 years ago, there was a famine in the land of Egypt. The crops would not grow and people were starving. The famine spread to the nearby land of Israel. During this dreadful time, Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام (Joseph), who was working in Egypt as the King of Egypt's minister, invited his father, Prophet Yaqub عليه السلام (Jacob), to come from the land of Israel to Egypt. Yaqub عليه السلام accepted the invitation, and so Yusuf's parents and all his



The Prophet Musa's ancestry

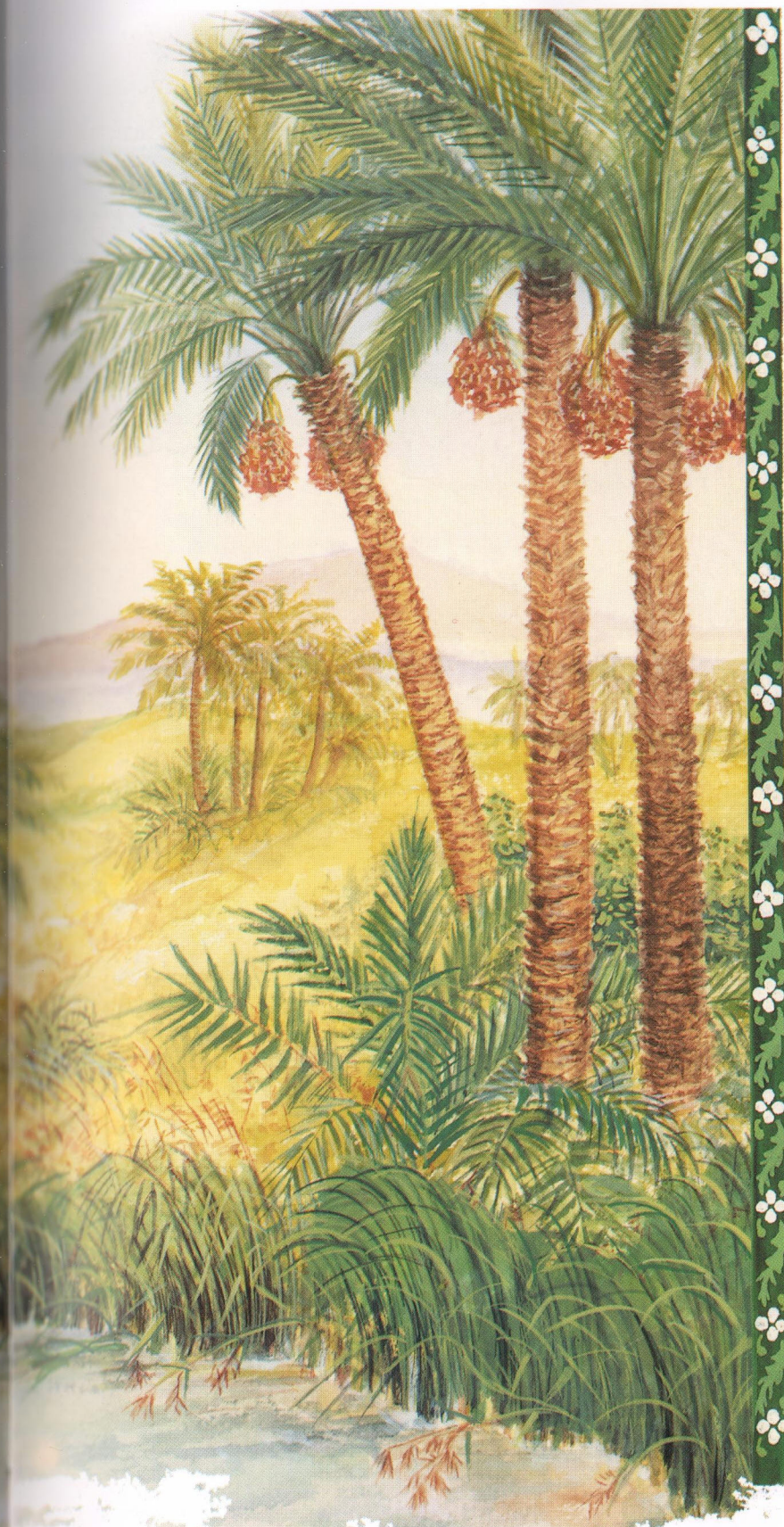
From his mother, Musa عليه السلام learned about the history of his own people—how Ibrahim عليه السلام, having destroyed the idols of his city, had been thrown into a fire to die, but, by a miracle had escaped unhurt; and how the Children of Israel were all descended from him. His favorite story was how Yusuf عليه السلام had been tricked by his brothers, brought to Egypt, and sold as a slave there, where he became powerful and famous. It was Yusuf عليه السلام who had brought all of his tribe to live with him in Egypt, and they had been there ever since.

brothers, along with their families, moved to Egypt. As guests of the king's minister, they received a very warm welcome.

After some time things improved, rains came, and the people in Egypt and Israel were able to get food. But Yaqub عليه السلام and his family stayed on in Egypt, making it their home forever. As the years went by Prophet Yaqub's family grew, and became a large tribe which was later known as the Israelites, or the Children of Israel. (In Arabic, they were

known as Banu Israil.) They were given this name because Yaqub عليه السلام, who was the father and head of this tribe, also had the name of Israel.

For four hundred years the Children of Israel lived peacefully in Egypt. Then Ramses II became



the king of Egypt. He was called Firawn or in English, Pharaoh (phonetic: fay-ro), which means *king*. Firawn was very cruel and mean. He made the Children of Israel his slaves. They were forced to do the hard labour of building huge monuments and structures for the Firawn, such as the pyramids. Firawn used his soldiers and police to torture them to get his work done.

From then on, the Children of Israel lived in great fear and suffering.



▲ The lands of Egypt

Egypt, still famous as the land of the pyramids, lies in the north east corner of Africa. It can trace its history back more than 3,000 years before the birth of Christ. For a very long time its people were pagans, bowing to idols and practising magic. They worshipped their kings as if they were gods. They knew nothing of the true source of power until Prophet Musa عليه السلام came to tell them. It was not until nearly the end of the seventh century that Egypt became an Islamic country.

2. The Birth of Musa عليه السلام



One day a soothsayer in Firawn's court told him that a boy would be born among the Children of Israel who would destroy him and his kingdom. Firawn was enraged, and he issued a barbaric decree. He ordered that all new-born boys of the Children of Israel were to be killed as soon as they were born!

During these dreadful times a pious woman of the Children of Israel, whose name was Yukabid, gave birth to a beautiful boy who later came to be known as Musa عليه السلام or, in English, Moses. His father's name was Imran. The parents of the little Musa عليه السلام were convinced that their young baby would soon be put to death by the cruel soldiers of Firawn, who were always on the lookout for a new-born baby among

the families of the Children of Israel.

As Musa's mother worried about this one day, something unusual happened. She was told by Allah that this was a very special child, and that one day he would become a great prophet. Allah inspired Yukabid to put her little baby into a box and cast it into the river Nile. Allah promised her that Musa عليه السلام would be safe and would soon be returned to her.

Yukabid carried out Allah's orders with hope and confidence. Still, her heart

beat rapidly with worry and excitement as she walked down to the river bank and gently put the box containing the baby Musa عليه السلام into the water. The baby's sister, whose name was Qulthum, hid nearby, crouching at the edge of the Nile, to see what would happen to him.



▲ The River Nile

The Nile, the mightiest river in Africa, is 6,700 kilometers in length. It starts in Lake Victoria and flows through Sudan and then Egypt to the Mediterranean. It brings water in plenty to countries with little or no rainfall. There its water has been used since ancient times for farming and all other purposes. Without the Nile waters, there would be no lush green fields and people would go thirsty.



3. A Box in the River



As the soft ripples of water carried the box containing the little Musa ﷺ slowly and gently away, his sister kept a watch on it. To her surprise the waves pushed the box slowly towards the royal palace. A member of Firawn's household noticed the box bobbing by the shore, and brought it to Queen Asiya, the wife of the tyrant Firawn.

The queen was not a cruel person like her husband; she was a kind-hearted and loving woman. When the box was opened and she saw the little soul lying there, she

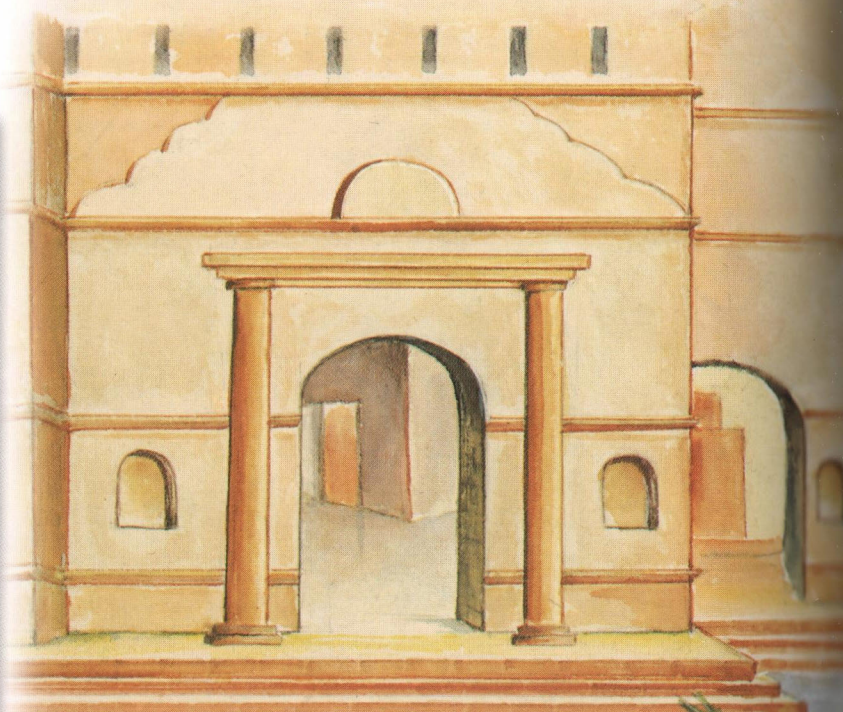


▲ Pyramids

The pyramids were built thousands of years ago as tombs for the ancient kings of Egypt. About 70 have been discovered, 16 of which have been identified. They stand in the desert a few miles east of Cairo. Among the most famous are the three great pyramids of Giza. A fourth pyramid was discovered there in 1932. The largest of all was made for Cheops (3733-3666 B.C.) and dates back to the fourth dynasty. It measures 755 feet on each side, is 451 feet high and covers 13 acres. It took 100,000 men 20 years to build it, using 6,000,000 tons of stone. The mechanical aids they used are still a mystery to us today.

exclaimed: "This is such a lovely child that whoever sees him cannot help but love him."

The news of the box containing a new-born baby spread through the palace. When Firawn heard, he guessed that this must be the act of a woman from the Children of Israel, who was trying to save her child from his order to kill every new-born baby boy. Firawn ordered that the child be put to death immediately. But Queen Asiya pleaded with her husband: "This child may bring joy to us both. Do not slay him." The queen wanted to



keep this baby boy. "He may show promise, and we may adopt him as our son," Queen Asiya said. Firawn trembled with rage that anyone would dare to disagree with him. But finally the queen's strong arguments touched his heart. In the end, Firawn relented and agreed that the child should be brought up in the palace under the queen's care.

Queen Asiya was thrilled. But, to her surprise, the baby would not stop crying. She called a wet-nurse, but the baby would not feed and continued wailing. Several nurses were called, but none could feed him. As it says in the Quran: "Allah caused him to refuse his nurses' breasts."

